

“That’s Part of What We Do”: The Performative Power of *Vogue*’s Anna Wintour

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Abstract

Vogue is universally recognized as the fashion world’s most influential magazine, and its editor Anna Wintour routinely hailed as the most powerful person in fashion. Wintour’s power, however, extends far beyond her influence on readers’ clothing tastes and purchases. Acting behind the scenes as consultant, kingmaker, power broker, and promoter to the fashion industry, Wintour inserts herself into fashion’s creative, business, and marketing practices, thus shaping the contours of the world her magazine purports to merely cover. In doing so, Wintour enacts her own interpretations of a number of foundational media theories and suggests ways to expand our understanding of the scope of media effects.

Keywords: fashion industry, gatekeeping, magazine editors, media effects, media theories, *Vogue*

Introduction

“Everywhere she goes, the waters part. The entire industry responds to Anna’s taste, her likes, her dislikes” (R. J. Cutler, quoted in Block, 2009).

“Anna,” of course, is Anna Wintour, editor-in-chief of *Vogue* since 1988 and the person routinely described as the most powerful in fashion.¹ R. J. Cutler, the filmmaker best known for *The War Room* (Cutler, Hegedus, & Pennebaker, 1993), about Bill Clinton’s first presidential campaign, knows firsthand how the fashion industry responds to Wintour’s tastes. He followed Wintour for eight months while shooting *The September Issue* (Cutler, 2009), his acclaimed documentary about the production of *Vogue*’s September 2007 issue which, at 840 pages, was the largest published to that point.²

As universal as the claim that Wintour is the most powerful person in fashion is the belief that she wields absolute power over the publication she edits. Indeed, Wintour’s imperious management of *Vogue* is practically the stuff of legend—and, for over a decade, fodder for popular culture. Her control over every aspect of her magazine’s content (not to mention the deportment of her employees) has inspired the best-selling novel *The Devil Wears Prada* (Weisberger, 2003), a hit movie based on that novel (Finerman & Frankel, 2006), a pair of unauthorized biographies (Kastelein, 2012; Oppenheimer, 2005), and two

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decades of breathless coverage by business, fashion, and culture reporters at leading newspapers and magazines based in New York (e.g., Givhan, 2012; Goudreau, 2011; Horyn, 2007; Kerwin, 2009; Levine, 2011; Pogrebin, 1997; Sischy, 1993; Wilson, 2013; Wilson & Horyn, 2012) and in Wintour's native London (e.g., Brockes, 2006; Hill, 2009; Jewell, 2009). Despite this, Wintour is rarely if ever called "the most powerful person in journalism," "the most powerful person in magazines," or even "the most powerful person in fashion magazines."³ Rather, Anna Wintour, the editor of a magazine, is repeatedly and simply described as the most powerful person in *fashion*.

Why might this matter to media scholars? Because the claim that the most powerful person in an industry is not one of its leading manufacturers, retailers, or designers but is instead the editor-in-chief of a magazine devoted to (supposedly) merely reporting on and critiquing that industry is rather unusual, if not unique.⁴ For scholars of the media, this has important implications for our understanding of the ways that media and their executives can hold sway over constituencies other than their audiences. This is not to discount the well-documented influence that Wintour and her magazine—routinely called "fashion's bible" (Kinsey, 2009; Pogrebin, 1997)—undoubtedly wield on the tastes, preferences, and purchases of *Vogue's* readers and, by extension, the consumer fashion market as a whole. However, this *audience* effect, powerful as it may be, is not the focus of the present study. Rather, what I intend to investigate here are the various ways in which Wintour exerts a rather different form of influence: on the workings and practices of the *fashion industry*—which is to say, on its designers, manufacturers, corporate executives, and retailers.

I intend to show, through an examination of Wintour's own words and actions, as well as those offered by people with whom she works closely, that Wintour not only occupies a distinctive place relative to the industry her magazine covers, but also plays an unusual role in the industry in which she is actually employed: the *media* industry. My intention is that this analysis will show how, in her singular approach to her position as editor-in-chief, Wintour reinterprets and even flouts a number of our foundational media theories and, in doing so, casts light on a category of media effects usually overlooked by media scholars: the influence that media and their executives wield over the domains that are the objects of their coverage.

Literature Review

Media Effects, Functions, and Prescriptions

Scholarship about the media, whether critical, interpretive, qualitative, quantitative, or administrative, is overwhelmingly concerned with effects, particularly audience effects. As Potter (2011) and colleagues (Potter & Riddle, 2007) have estimated, as many as 4,000 studies on effects were published between the 1920s and the first decade of the 21st century. Yet, as Potter (2011) points out, "although most of these individual effects present scholars with a clear conceptualization of that particular effect, there is comparatively little work that

focuses attention on what a 'media effect' means at a more general level" (p. 896). Among the exceptions are Bryant and Zillmann (2009), who say that effects are "social or psychological changes that occur in consumers of the media message systems" (p. 13), and McQuail (2005), who defines media effects as "the consequences or outcomes of the working of, or exposure to, mass media whether or not intended" (p. 554).

Having conducted an exhaustive review of the effects literature, Potter (2011) offered his own definition: "A mass media effect is a change in an outcome within a person or social entity that is due to mass media influence following exposure to a mass media message or series of messages" (p. 903). Potter's definition is useful for the present study in that it acknowledges that media may influence not only an individual audience member but also a "social entity," a term he uses to refer to "both an informal collection as well as a formal organization of individuals" (p. 903)—including, presumably, a business sector such as the fashion industry, or any aggregation of its employees or executives. At the same time, Potter's stipulation that a mass media effect *follows* exposure to a media message fails to capture the types of influences exerted by Anna Wintour that I will be concerned about in the present study: the consequences of the actions of a media entity/executive that occur *prior to*—or even in the absence of—an act of message dissemination.

Despite the absence of a media-effects definition that encompasses the sorts of influences I will be documenting, one particular theory that describes a subtle yet powerful media effect merits a brief review here. *Agenda-setting theory*, as originally formulated by McCombs and Shaw (1972), argues that those items or issues featured most frequently and prominently in the media become the ones to which audience members give the highest priority. While McCombs and Shaw focused on the relationship between political coverage and audiences' political attitudes, their theory's broader implications about the power of the media to set agendas—for audiences and, potentially, other constituencies—will be of particular importance to my analysis of Anna Wintour's impacts upon the world of fashion.

Also directly relevant to the exploration of Wintour's actions, both within and outside of the editorial role, are a number of important early media theories that focus not on effects but rather on *functions* or *processes* of the media., such as the social function identified as *status conferral* by Lazarsfeld and Merton (1948) and *transmission of the social heritage*, one of three functions of the media (along with *surveillance of the environment* and *correlation of the parts of society*) identified by Harold Lasswell in his own influential 1948 essay "The Structure and Function of Communication in Society."

Another area of media scholarship offering particularly fruitful applications to the analysis of Anna Wintour's power is that of *gatekeeping theory*, which describes the content selection processes undertaken by media "gatekeepers" such as reporters, editors, and producers (Bass, 1969; Lewin, 1947, 1951; Lippmann, 1922; Shoemaker, 1991; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009; White, 1950). As I will show, Wintour's approach to the gatekeeping process extends the notion beyond its current boundaries in several important ways.

The final foundational media-theory category of direct relevance to the current project—primarily because Anna Wintour in so many ways flouts its prescriptions—is that of *normative theories of the media*, which “explain how a media system *should* operate in order to conform to or realize a set of social values” (Baran & Davis, 2012, p. 14; emphasis in original). Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng, and White (2009) identify four normative roles played by the media in democratic societies: monitorial, facilitative, radical, and collaborative. Of these, the monitorial role, which encompasses the notion that journalists should be neutral and objective in their reporting, has come to be seen as representing the reportorial gold standard (Schudson, 2001; Waisbord, 2013), yet is a role that does not appear as important to Anna Wintour as the facilitative and collaborative roles. The normative notion of journalistic autonomy from outside interests, another core ideal of professional journalism, is also of concern to the present analysis. As Waisbord (2013) notes, “only a journalism that keeps external actors at a distance can report evenhandedly and fairly” (p. 44).⁵ As discussed below, Wintour’s close involvement with “external actors” sidesteps this normative call for autonomy.

Fashion Journalism and Its Relationship to the Fashion Industry

The various foundational theories discussed above were developed primarily to describe or prescribe the workings of mainstream journalism or “hard news.” Virtually nowhere in the literature of mass communication theory do we find any treatment of the functions or processes of fashion journalism or normative work describing the ways that fashion media are supposed to operate in order to meet ideals or standards specific to their own category.⁶ This may not be surprising, given the low status accorded to fashion and the scholarly study of fashion as a whole (Bruzzi & Church Gibson, 2000; Crane, 2000; Edwards, 2011; Evans, 2000; Kawamura, 2005, 2011; McRobbie, 1998; Troy, 2003). However, the processes, norms, and effects of fashion journalism do figure prominently in the literature of the growing field of fashion studies, or “fashion-ology,” as Kawamura (2005) is attempting to rename the field.⁷

Inspiring much of the recent fashion-studies scholarship on the processes and functions of fashion journalism is the notion of “the fashion system,” an idea originated by semiotician and literary critic Roland Barthes (1967/1983) in his eponymous book and further developed by a number of fashion scholars in subsequent decades (e.g., Blumer, 1969; Davis, 1992; Kawamura, 1994, 2005; Leopold, 1993; Rocamura, 2012). Whereas Barthes was concerned with clothing and its wearing as a “language” through which cultural meanings are created and communicated, the phrase “fashion system” has now come to mean the “network of designers, manufacturers, wholesalers, public relations officers, journalists, and advertising agencies” involved with any of the creative, economic, or communication components of fashion, including that of signification (Kawamura, 2005, p. 45).

While fashion scholars differ somewhat in their definitions of the fashion system, there appears to be universal agreement that (fashion) journalism—and the fashion media sector more broadly—is a crucial *component* of that system rather than an institution that, in line with the normative monitorial role for news institutions discussed above, stands apart from its object of coverage in a way that could be described as “neutral,” “objective,” or “autonomous.” Indeed, the fashion studies literature provides a variety of arguments for the media’s centrality to the fashion system. Welters (2011), for example, observes that “magazines are a vital part of the fashion industry” (p. 395), while Moeran (2006) shows how fashion magazines’ editorial calendars, which mirror that of designers’ semi-annual collections, illustrate their “inseparability . . . from the fashion industry” (p. 728). Kawamura (2005) goes further still, devoting almost an entire chapter of *Fashion-ology* to explicating the ways in which “institutions that help create and spread fashion, such as fashion magazines and newspaper periodicals, are participants in the system” (p. 88). As she explains, “designers alone cannot produce fashion, nor can they sustain the fashion system that leads to the making of fashion culture . . . The link between the production/ distribution of clothing and the dissemination of the idea of fashion is interdependent” (p. 73).

While Kawamura (2005) is restrained in her judgment of this interdependence—as she puts it, “this reciprocal dependency does not encourage unbiased fashion reporting” (p. 81)—critical/cultural scholar Angela McRobbie, in her 1998 book *British Fashion Design: Rag Trade or Image Industry?*, offers a more critical assessment. McRobbie notes that the fashion media provide not just “a display window for fashion design” but rather “a pillar of support” for the fashion industry. Fashion writers, photographers, and editors, McRobbie observes, are “more closely linked with the fashion industry than would be the case in other journalistic fields”; indeed, she argues, they “share the same ‘fashion world’” as designers and fashion executives (pp. 151, 152). Because this so-called fashion world is “relatively closed, [it is] difficult to untangle the relationship between fashion design and fashion media. We are not able to simply place the designers in one corner and the editors and journalists in the other” (p. 161).⁸ As a result, McRobbie argues, fashion journalism is not only different from other forms of journalism but also “occupies a much lower status” (p. 167). McRobbie suggests, however, that this lower status is not only a reflection of fashion journalism’s “closely linked” relationship to the fashion industry; it is also a result of the poor quality of its content. Fashion writing, to McRobbie, “is informative or celebratory, it is never critical, only mildly ironical . . . The images might be designed to shock, but the text remains culturally reassuring . . . no real offense is ever spoken” (pp. 153, 173).

Paradoxically, while McRobbie (1998) argues that the writing of fashion journalism lacks a critical bite she points out that fashion editors themselves can be rather formidable. Since the middle of the 20th century, she notes, “the key figures in this world were the fashion editors, both feared and adulated, with dominating personalities who ruled the world of fashion” (p. 166). This tradition of the powerful fashion editor may have been most firmly established by Diana Vreeland, *Vogue*’s larger-than-life editor-in-chief from 1963 to 1971, but it did not die with her. Rather, McRobbie argues, “this image of the fashion editor as a

powerful and influential figure, an icon of glamour and a patron of the arts, continues to influence the practice of fashion journalism today” (p. 166). In McRobbie’s critique, then, a fashion editor’s power is not based in her writing but rather in her position as agenda-setter and gatekeeper. Fashion editors, she notes,

... set the agendas for the look that will be promoted each season. They ... decide which designers to feature and which looks to promote. This conforms with the gatekeeping role of editors across the different forms of media. They have the power to select one story and veto others. (p. 167)

***Vogue* and Anna Wintour: Scholarly Treatments**

That *Vogue* is, and has long been, the world’s most influential fashion magazine is a pronouncement uttered regularly in the popular press⁹ and frequently echoed by fashion scholars. In her book *Fashion: The Key Concepts*, British scholar Jennifer Craik (2009) claims that “of all the fashion magazines, the most influential and long lasting has been *Vogue* USA” (p. 250). In his magisterial work *Fashion*, Christopher Breward (2003) explains that *Vogue*’s influence stems at least in part from the magazine’s pioneering work in “underpin[ning] the modern idea of fashion as a global phenomenon [and] the strength of its aesthetic direction” (pp. 122-123), qualities of the magazine evidenced almost since its founding in 1892. Troy (2003) traces *Vogue*’s symbiosis with the fashion industry as far back as World War I, when the magazine’s publishers staged events highlighting and supporting the work of American designers.

While *Vogue* has received a good deal of scholarly attention—including, in 2006, an entire issue of *Fashion Theory*, the leading journal in the fashion studies field—very little academic work has spoken about Anna Wintour. The rare exceptions include a *Fashion Theory* article analyzing the impact of *Vogue* editors on their magazine’s content (Borelli, 1997); a book entitled *Fashion and Celebrity Culture* (Church Gibson, 2012) that shed little light on Wintour beyond explicating her status as a celebrity in the fashion industry¹⁰; and McRobbie’s 1998 study, *British Fashion Design: Rag Trade or Image Industry?* Of these, only the last offers a scholarly exploration of the power of the *Vogue* editor traditionally and its current editor specifically. McRobbie (1998) discusses the support (or “patronage”) Anna Wintour gave in the 1990s to John Galliano, then an up-and-coming young British designer, and places Wintour within the broader historical context of *Vogue*’s distinctive role in the fashion system:

The history of *Vogue* magazine reveals a lineage of grande dame editors most of whom were unashamedly elitist in their desire to create a luxury magazine for well-to-do readers. These editors did a great deal to bring fashion design into prominence as an art. They achieved this partly by treating key fashion designers as creative geniuses . . . Since then this tradition has been taken as the canon of fashion journalism. The editor of *Vogue* occupies the best seat at all the shows and her power and influence are undisputed.¹¹ (p. 173)

Research Questions

Based on the above literature review, the following research questions frame this study:

- What roles in the fashion industry does Anna Wintour play beyond those directly relevant to her “day job” as editor-in-chief of *Vogue*?
- How does Wintour define herself relative to the spheres of publishing, media, and fashion?
- What do Wintour's roles and self-definitions suggest about the workings of the fashion industry and its relationship with the fashion media?
- How do Wintour's roles and self-definitions reflect the reinterpretation or even flouting of foundational media theories concerning effects, functions, and norms?
- What new or neglected categories of effects are suggested by Wintour's distinctive approach to her job?

Method

The primary method used in the present study is *generative criticism*, a content-driven rhetorical method. The process of generative criticism involves “coding the artifact in general” (noticing and interpreting the features of the artifact that occur with greatest intensity, frequency, and/or in patterns) and then “searching for an explanation; creating an explanatory schema; formulating a research question, coding the artifact in detail, searching the literature, framing the study, and writing the essay” (Foss, 2004, pp. 411, 413). As such, generative criticism resembles *thematic analysis* which, as described by Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2012), “move[s] beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focus[es] on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data, that is, themes” (p. 10).

The initial stage of my analysis focused on content in R. J. Cutler's (2009) documentary *The September Issue*. While the movie's ostensible topic was the labor undertaken by Anna Wintour and her *Vogue* staff during the months leading up to the 2007 publication of the eponymous issue, I focused specifically on (a) Wintour's behaviors shown in the film that ostensibly had little or nothing to do with the job of producing a magazine and/or (b) statements Wintour made that described, explained, or related to those behaviors. I organized these behaviors and statements into an initial group of categories or themes, as is typically done in thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012) as well as in generative criticism (Foss, 2004). Each theme that emerged is a role played by Wintour.

Texts and Data

In addition to subjecting *The September Issue* to repeated viewings and its relevant content to repeated codings, I also analyzed ten other media texts¹² in which Wintour either (a) provides her own descriptions of her roles and actions relative to her job and the industry/ies in which she works, (b) is seen carrying out those roles and actions, or (c) both. Beyond supplying additional data, these texts allowed me to refine the initial theme list and identify new themes, and thus draw a more complete picture of Wintour's professional roles as she enacts and comments upon them. The elements of the final theme list serve as the subsection titles in the Findings section, below.

For the most part, the data I extracted in order to arrive at the final theme list consist of Wintour's own words and actions. In some of the texts reviewed, Wintour's words appear as answers to interview questions posed by producers, directors, or reporters. In others, Wintour's words are captured on film while she is shown in action; that is, in "real life" conversations with co-workers, employees, or other business associates, or while performing some public or professional function. In these cases, I analyzed both the words uttered and the context or action with which they were associated. In a few cases, I also analyzed or commented upon the words or actions of people in conversation or interaction with Wintour or those who spoke to the documentarians about Wintour. In almost all such instances, these utterances directly precede or directly follow scenes of or statements made by Wintour and thus serve to comment on or explain Wintour's own utterances or actions.

Limitations

Because the words and actions examined in the present study are all mediated, they are inevitably selective in what they depict: those statements and behaviors of Wintour that I analyze have been made public by journalists and documentary filmmakers who have themselves made critical decisions about what content to include in their own texts. Additionally, as Wintour was aware that she was being filmed, it is possible that at certain moments she was presenting herself as she would like to be seen. (At other moments, Wintour is captured in ways that can only be described as unflattering.)

In order to mitigate these limitations, between July 2011 and December 2013 I conducted five in-person and telephone interviews, each lasting between 60 and 90 minutes, with current and former New York City-based fashion industry professionals who have regularly interacted with Wintour, *Vogue* staffers, and other fashion media leaders over the course of their careers. In these interviews, I asked my respondents to describe their interactions with Wintour, to provide their impressions of her involvement with their own design work and that of other designers and manufacturers, and to offer their opinions about the appropriateness of the direct involvement of fashion media personnel in general—and Wintour in particular—in the fashion industry's workings. Where appropriate, I have included references to their observations and their corroborations of my own. Conducting these interviews provided not only valuable industry-insider insights but also provided me

with critical perspectives on my own “outsider’s” perspective. At the same time, I found that I was unable to solicit as many interviews as I might have liked—merely mentioning that I was conducting research on Anna Wintour deterred several prospective respondents who have ongoing professional relationships with her from speaking to me at all. Further, among those industry professionals that did agree to be interviewed, only one allowed me to refer to him by name.

Findings: Wintour’s Roles and Self-Identification

The opening segment of the May 17, 2009, episode of CBS’s *60 Minutes* newsmagazine program (Streeter, 2009) was devoted to Anna Wintour. Long-time host Morley Safer reported this segment, serving as the audience’s guide via on-camera interviews with Wintour and off-camera commentary about her and her staff as they went about their daily duties. During a scene in which he accompanied Wintour to a fashion show, Safer commented in voiceover: “To an outsider, these shows are another planet; part dazzling, part *Rocky Horror* show.... It’s a planet where Wintour feels comfortably at home—where she acts as a cheerleader, power broker, and consultant.” In this section, I will explore these and a number of other roles played by Wintour—roles that are not normally played by traditional magazine editors and that, as a result, cause us to reexamine our own understanding of the media and their functions.

“Director and Producer of this Fashion World”

As noted earlier, it has become almost a cliché for any text covering Anna Wintour to identify her as “the most powerful person in fashion.” Those analyzed for the present study are no exception. Shortly after the opening of *The September Issue* (2009), for example, director R. J. Cutler talks with *Vogue*’s publisher, Tom Florio, about Wintour:

Florio: She sees her role as the director and producer of this fashion world.

Cutler: Can you think of an aspect of the fashion industry that she isn’t somehow involved in?

Florio [after a long pause]: No.

Fortunately, we are not limited to such third-person comments. Indeed, throughout *The September Issue* and other texts, we are given a firsthand look at the “director and producer of this fashion world” actually wielding her power—and we see people in a variety of industry sectors fearing and respecting it. In one such scene, filmed during Paris’s Fashion Week, Wintour is shown backstage after the conclusion of the Nina Ricci show, meeting with designer Olivier Theyskens and Mario Grauso, president of Ricci’s parent company and a man described by *Avenue Magazine* (Smith, 2011) as a “fashion force to be reckoned with.” Wintour is clearly unhappy about the event’s scheduling, a sentiment she expresses to Grauso:

Wintour: Now, you're never gonna show on Sunday again, right?

Grauso: Yes, I know it's torture.

Wintour: Because I'm only staying for you guys.

Grauso: Yes, I know that and I appreciate it.

Wintour: I'm outta here. [Then, to Theyskens]: Mario says you won't do it again.

Grauso: I promise, I promise.

Theyskens and Grauso are not the only “fashion forces to be reckoned with” who fear and respect Wintour, as evidenced by a segment of Morley Safer's *60 Minutes* profile (Streeter, 2009). Here, Safer and Wintour visit a workroom as Safer provides voiceover: “When she drops in on a designer, it is make-or-break time. Nicolas Ghesquière of Balenciaga was anxious to please when Wintour stopped by at his studio.” During their visit, Safer asks Ghesquière about Wintour: “Do you keep her in mind when you're working on a new collection or a new design?” Ghesquière's response is quite telling: “There is always a moment when you question whether Anna will like it or not, for sure. I think any designer who says the contrary would lie.”

Fairy Godmother—and Kingmaker

While Wintour may be feared by many in the fashion industry, there are countless others who are grateful for the ways she wields her power for good—or, at least, for the good of those whose careers she chooses to champion. Indeed, significant portions of *The September Issue* (Cutler, 2009) and the BBC's *Boss Women* Wintour profile (Lichtenstein & Hall, 2000) provide detailed evidence of the various forms that championing takes.

The designer perhaps most frequently recognized as having benefited from Wintour's devotion is John Galliano. One *Boss Women* segment, for example, shows Wintour and Galliano lunching together, after which Galliano speaks to the off-camera director:

The reason I'm here at the House of Dior is because of Anna Wintour, although she'll say, “no, it's your talent, John.” But she really pushed me when I had no money and nowhere to live. She shot a lot of the collection for *Vogue*, which is unheard of; the collection hadn't even been sold. She flew me to New York . . . and these pictures were shown to [Paine Webber chairman] John Bult [who] bankrolled me . . .

Wintour herself then explains to camera why she helped Galliano in this way:

It isn't often that you meet a great designer. I mean if you think about the great designers that have really changed the way women dress or look or how

we think about fashion, immediately when you saw what John was doing, you realized that he was one of them. So, it was like we just had to help him. There was just no question that we had to keep this man going. That's part of what we do.

While Wintour may have helped one designer at a time in her early days at *Vogue*, she has since institutionalized the practice. Indeed, the entire purpose of the movie *Seamless* (Keeve & Tubio-Cid, 2005) is to document (and publicize) the inaugural year of the CFDA/*Vogue* Fashion Fund, which Wintour founded in 2003. As she explains to camera, “the Fund started because it became so evident to all of us at *Vogue* that young talent, both in New York and on a worldwide basis, needed help.” As shown in *Seamless*, this “help” officially includes cash, a year of professional mentoring, and editorial coverage in *Vogue*—and, unofficially, the benefit of Wintour's industry connections and her willingness to leverage them. At one point during the film, Wintour discusses contestant Alexandre Plokhov with her fellow Fund panelists: “I think that guy is . . . a true designer. We could help hook him up with an Italian designer, or a big house that needs help, and he could easily do it.” Wintour's power is not lost on Plokhov; as he awaits Wintour's visit to his studio, Plokhov comments that “the editor of American *Vogue* coming is a pretty monumental event. It's pretty much like Bill Gates coming to a start-up computer company to see what they're doing. She's a kingmaker.”

In the years since the Fund's founding, such king-making—or, at least, the process of “hooking up” winners with established fashion companies—has become an official part of the prize package, thanks to Wintour. Indeed, one subplot of *The September Issue* (Cutler, 2009) involves designer Thakoon Panichgul, a 2006 CFDA/*Vogue* Fashion Fund runner-up whose prize included the opportunity to create a mini-collection for clothing retailer The Gap, with design and marketing input provided by Wintour every step of the way. At the party thrown to celebrate the launch of Thakoon's line, Wintour tells him, “I told you I'd get you The Gap,” to which he responds: “Thank you so much. I didn't realize it was going to turn into such a big, big deal.”

Wintour herself obviously sees the work she does to help young designers as a “big, big deal.” In a *Wall Street Journal* interview (Dodes, 2009), Wintour plugged the relationship between *Vogue*, the Gap, and the Fund: “One of the collaborations we do through the Fashion Fund is with the Gap. Gap takes the designers all over the world, and photographs them with young models wearing the shirts. And the shirts are fabulous.” Almost two years later, in a video interview with the UK's *Telegraph* (Alexander, 2010), Wintour offered an even more grandiose take on her impact: “Through the creation of the CFDA/*Vogue* Fashion Fund, we've changed the landscape of American fashion.”

Consultant to Established Designers

Wintour does not limit her guidance to new, young talent. Throughout the group of texts I reviewed, and most prominently in *The September Issue* (Cutler, 2009) she can be seen

serving as a consultant to established names as well. Indeed, in six separate *September Issue* scenes, Wintour is shown meeting with some of the fashion world's most acclaimed designers in order to preview—and critique—their in-progress clothing lines. Among these are the following:

- Wintour visits the Yves St. Laurent studio to meet with head designer Stefano Pilati several days before his Paris Fashion Week show. As models walk past Wintour wearing designs Pilati is considering presenting, she comments: “I don't see any real evening on that rack. You're not doing it?” Pilati tries to justify the thinking behind his largely monochrome collection, but Wintour interrupts: “So, you're not really feeling for color, Stefano?” They laugh about the line's predominance of black, but Wintour's facial expression does not indicate pleasure or approval.
- Oscar de la Renta previews his new line for Wintour. “Fabulous color,” Wintour says about one dress; about another, she remarks “I personally would not put this one in the show, but the other things you've shown us are more exciting.” De la Renta then directs her attention to a wall covered with photographs of other dresses. “All this,” he tells her, “actually is still under consideration”—to which Wintour retorts, “you need to edit.”
- Wintour meets with Nina Ricci's head designer, Olivier Theyskens. He presents one completed dress, but spends most of his time with Wintour showing her fabric swatches and sketches of designs in early conceptual stages, discussing colors and textures he is considering for a future line, and seeking her input. In response to one sketch, Wintour says “that's great, Olivier,” to which he responds, “I'm so thrilled.”

My interviews with current and former fashion industry executives, all of whom themselves have previewed their work for Wintour and made design revisions at her behest, confirmed that such reviews—and responses—are routine. While editors of other fashion magazines are also given previews, their suggestions for revision do not typically carry as much weight as those offered by Wintour (S. Ianiere, personal communication, December 9, 2011).

Fashion Industry Power-Broker

Wintour's involvement in the fashion industry goes beyond merely discovering and mentoring new talent or providing line-editing suggestions to elite designers. As captured on camera both in *The September Issue* (Cutler, 2009) and Morley Safer's *60 Minutes* segment (Streeter, 2009), and as documented by *Wall Street Journal* reporter Joshua Levine (2011), Wintour provides business advice, counsel, and matchmaking services to top-level corporate executives in fashion's manufacturing and retail sectors.

As noted above, Wintour was instrumental in launching the career of British designer John Galliano. As documented by *60 Minutes*, Wintour has continued to intervene in his

professional development, going as far as recommending Galliano to Bernard Arnault, chairman of the LVMH luxury conglomerate (corporate parent of Givenchy and Christian Dior, two labels for which Galliano served as creative director). As Arnault tells Morley Safer, "When I hired John, I discussed at length with [Wintour]. Obviously at the time it was a risk, because he was not as well-known as he is today. But I was comforted by Anna about what he could do and finally I took the risk."¹³ Safer's subsequent discussion with Wintour about the Arnault/Galliano interaction is quite revealing:

Safer: That gives you a remarkable kind of power. Much more power than any mere editor-in-chief of a magazine normally has.

Wintour: Well, we can advise, Morley. We can't dictate. And obviously, in the end, those gentlemen are very capable of making up their own minds.

Safer: But they have the remarkable habit of going along with your ideas.

Wintour: Well, we can only point them in that direction.

Wintour exerts this "remarkable kind of power" over industry executives operating at other loci in the fashion world, as captured in a pivotal *September Issue* scene that takes place during the annual *Vogue* retailers' breakfast. Wintour, *Vogue*'s fashion market/accessories director Virginia Smith, and other staffers are shown meeting with top executives of luxury department store Neiman-Marcus. Smith opens the conversation, telling Neiman-Marcus CEO Burton Tansky about how Wintour interceded with leading design firm Prada in regard to one of their garments which apparently had not been selling well at Neiman ("Anna had a lot of concerns over the product and spoke to Mrs. Prada on your behalf, many times.") Wintour then confirms her own involvement with the designer:

We felt that the pieces were just so heavy that you couldn't wear [them], so . . . we really pushed. They did tell me that they are doing a version in silk and mohair, as opposed to the heavy wool and mohair.

Tansky then turns the conversation in another direction that points to Wintour's power, both actual and perceived:

Tansky: Let me touch on something that may be out of your purview, but maybe you can help us: Deliveries of merchandise.

Wintour (laughing): What would you like me to do? Rent a truck?

Tansky: I'll tell you what I'd like you to do. You are so influential with the designers.

Wintour (still laughing): Not with that!

Tansky: They're not keeping up with the production, so the demand is outstripping supply . . . We're waiting longer and longer and longer for deliveries . . . You've gotta help us with this, so you have a couple of choices. Either you can start selling it yourselves, or you can—

Wintour: No, I think you said something very interesting, which is editing—and I think some of the designers do have a problem with that, and we are working on that, and we'll certainly—we are right there with you. Less is more.

That a top retail executive believes that Wintour, a magazine editor, has enough clout in the fashion industry to affect the speed of designers' product delivery to his stores is a breathtaking testament to Wintour's role—and reputation—as a fashion *industry* power broker.

Fashion Industry Supporter

In addition to finding, coaching, mentoring—and then influencing—individual designers, in recent years Wintour has been increasingly active in creating and promoting events that support the fashion industry as a whole. Since the late 1990s, Wintour has run the annual gala benefit for the Costume Institute at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, an activity captured on film in both the BBC's *Boss Women* profile (Lichtenstein & Hall, 2000) and Morley Safer's *60 Minutes* segment (Streeter, 2009).¹⁴ As Safer puts it: "Every year Anna organizes a benefit which so far has raised nearly \$50 million. . . . When Anna calls, the fashion houses are only too eager to cough up as much as \$250,000 a table."

The *Boss Women* episode also chronicles Wintour's involvement with the VH1/*Vogue* Fashion Awards show, an event that took place from 1999 to 2003. Wintour is shown in her office watching a videotape with several staffers as a voiceover announcer explains: "The fashion industry's Oscars are taking place in a few days, and Anna has final approval of the scripts and prerecorded videos that will be included in the show. This is the first time *Vogue* has sponsored the awards." As Wintour comments to camera later in the episode,

That's part of what we do. It's not only about putting the clothes in the magazine; it's about stimulating interest in the whole industry. . . . I think anything I can do that can bring attention to the world of fashion and to the industry as a whole is incredibly important. I mean I like to think of myself as someone that can support and help the industry way beyond what I just do by sitting at my desk at *Vogue*.

More recently, Wintour has done much more than merely "bring attention to the world of fashion"—she has been actively drumming up financial support for the fashion industry through an annual event called "Fashion's Night Out," which she initiated in the

wake of the 2008 economic downturn. As Wintour explains in a 2011 *Forbes* interview (Goudreau, 2011),

Three years ago, maybe four now, we were all in Paris at the collections, and every single CEO of a department store is telling us all how difficult the situation was and how women . . . weren't even going into the stores. . . . Every single editor-in-chief of the international *Vogues* got together. . . . We talked to all the department stores and the designers. We decided that staying up all night was a bit over-ambitious, but we would do it on exactly the same night all over the world, wherever we published a *Vogue*.

Fashion's Night Out (FNO) took place each September between 2009 and 2012, growing bigger each year. During those years, Wintour appeared on several high-profile media outlets to promote it. Most notably, on September 14, 2010, CBS aired a prime-time special dedicated to the event. On the morning of the broadcast, the network also devoted a segment of its *Early Show* news program (Tufaro, 2010) to an interview with Wintour, who noted that the impetus behind the event was "to create a fashion stimulus." As she explained to reporter Erica Hill, "we were very anxious for people to keep their jobs, to be able to send their kids to school, pay the rent, all those things that I think get lost with all the glamour of the industry."

Self-Identification: Member of the Fashion Industry

That Anna Wintour, a magazine editor, would be so deeply involved with not only publicizing but also fundraising for the fashion industry might seem rather surprising. However, as she has revealed in several public conversations—either self-consciously or otherwise—she sees herself as being a member of that industry, perhaps as much as, if not more than, being a member of the publishing, journalism, magazine, or even fashion-magazine industries.

During an appearance on CBS's *Late Show with David Letterman* (Stangel & Foley, 2009) on August 24, 2009, two weeks before the first Fashion's Night Out, Wintour described her motivation for launching the event: "Particularly right now, when *all of us* are having such a challenging time *in the industry*, we've organized an evening called Fashion's Night Out. [It will be] a huge party, getting people back into the stores and getting people excited about fashion again" [emphasis added]. And once *The September Issue* (Cutler, 2009) debuted in theaters, Wintour's (self) categorization as a member of the fashion industry was even more clearly underscored. At one point in the film, Wintour talks to Cutler about her interest as a teenager in fashion and the influence at that time of her father—Charles Wintour, who for decades edited *The London Evening Standard* (Leapman, 1999)—on her own career:

I think my father decided for me that I should work in fashion . . . I can't remember what form it was I had to fill out . . . At the bottom it said "career

objectives.” [He said,] “well, you write that you want to be editor of *Vogue*, of course.” That was it. It was decided.

That both Charles Wintour, himself a journalist, and Anna Wintour considered editing *Vogue* as being synonymous with “work[ing] in fashion”—as opposed to, say, working in magazines—is quite telling. Yet it is clear that the Wintours are not the only people who see this equivalency. In a 1993 profile in *Interview*, reporter Ingrid Sischy asked Wintour, “Why have you chosen this ever-changing, hard-to-survive-in thing called fashion?” Later in that same *Interview* piece, after hearing Wintour talk about how passionate and talented her fellow *Vogue* editors were, Sischy commented that Wintour herself “clearly [has] the passion” as well—to which Wintour responded: “Yes, I love it. Fashion’s my job.”

Wintour offered a similar revelation about her professional self-identity during her interview on Barbara Walters’s *Most Fascinating People* special (Geddie, 2006). Walters asked her what she thought of the film *The Devil Wears Prada*, whose lead character, the imperious fashion magazine editor Miranda Priestley, was widely believed to be based on Wintour. Wintour gamely—and tellingly—responded, “I thought the film was really entertaining. I mean, anything that makes fashion entertaining and glamorous and interesting is wonderful for our industry, so I was 100% behind it.” Arguably, Wintour could just as easily have said that the movie made magazines, or publishing, or journalism, or media “entertaining and glamorous and interesting”—but that was not what she said.¹⁵

Discussion

Comprehending Wintour’s Power

In 2010, filmmaker R. J. Cutler wrote an article for *The Huffington Post* describing the experience of spending eight months with Wintour as she put together the September 2007 issue of *Vogue*. This excerpt is telling both for what Cutler notices and what he fails to see:

While making *The September Issue*, I observed Anna Wintour day-in and day-out as she single-handedly commanded the \$300-billion global fashion industry . . . [As] I observed to a friend who asked what it was like to watch Anna work, “Well, you can make a film in Hollywood without Steven Spielberg’s blessing, and you can publish software in Silicon Valley without Bill Gates’s blessing,¹⁶ but it’s pretty clear to me that you can’t succeed in the fashion industry without Anna Wintour’s blessing.” I was being dramatic, of course, and all rules have their exceptions, but the point was clear—if you’re going to get ahead in fashion, you’d best have Anna on your side . . . Her absolute power over a single industry reminded me of Mike Ovitz when he did, in fact, rule Hollywood and all deals seemed to somehow pass through his desk. Or of Frank Rich when he was the Head Drama Critic for *The New York Times* and his review alone determined a new production’s fate—

advance sales, other critical responses, and celebrity names on the marquee be damned. (Cutler, 2010)

Cutler's observation, while perhaps accurately conveying the *extent* of Wintour's power, fails to capture the distinctiveness of her *position* relative to that power. Bill Gates, hailed by Cutler as the most powerful person in the software business, ran a company that actually makes software; similarly, Steven Spielberg actually directs and produces movies. But Wintour, credited by Cutler as having "absolute power" over the fashion industry, is not a producer, designer, manufacturer, or retailer of fashion. She is a magazine editor.

Even as Cutler compares Wintour to Frank Rich (who is, as least, also a media industry employee), he fails to notice that Rich's notorious influence was always effected after, and as a result of, the moment of his publications, and was proximally an audience effect. Rich would write a scathing review and as a result, audiences would be influenced: They would decide to not see a show and the show would then close. As Cutler correctly observed, Rich determined a production's *fate*. However, Wintour, unlike Rich, works with people in the industry she covers as they are developing their products, and thus intervenes in their *creation*. Her power is exerted before/during the moment of *fashion's* material production as well as through/after the moment of her *magazine's* publication. (The inclusion or exclusion of a designer's clothing in its pages influences readers' tastes and purchase decisions. And, of course, this audience influence must play a role in any designer's willingness to take Wintour's advice; they listen to her suggestions at least in part because they recognize her magazine's impact on its readers.) Still, Cutler's analogy would hold up only if Rich, in addition to writing reviews, had also attended play rehearsals in order to give suggestions on casting, staging, and line readings to directors, writers, and actors. Such a counterfactual scenario would be considered beyond the pale for a theater critic—yet is *de rigueur* for *Vogue's* editor.

Cutler's comparison of Anna Wintour to Michael Ovitz is also inapt. Ovitz was an agent; by definition, his job was to structure deals. Wintour, however, is not an agent. Her position as *Vogue's* editor-in-chief requires her to run a magazine that reports on the fashion industry—not to place designers in jobs, broker deals between retailers and design companies, or persuade venture capitalists to bankroll new talent. But Wintour does these things anyway; indeed, as she herself says matter-of-factly, and on more than one occasion, "that's part of what we do" (Lichtenstein & Hall, 2000).¹⁷ And given that Wintour sees her many non-editorial roles and functions—those located more clearly on the industry side than the media side of the fashion system—as simply "part of what we do," perhaps it is unsurprising that Wintour's own professional self-identity also places her more squarely in the world that *Vogue* covers than it does in the world of magazines themselves.

Relevance to Media Studies

All of this makes Anna Wintour a fascinating figure in her own right. But Wintour holds especial interest for media scholars for, as I hope I have shown, Wintour's many

activities, interests, and influences signal what an unusual figure she is in the media business: in addition to putting out a magazine every month, Wintour acts as a co-creator of fashion, serving as design and retail consultant, industry publicist and promoter, and talent scout. While Diana Vreeland established in the 1960s that *Vogue's* editor could be a “powerful and influential figure” in the fashion industry (McRobbie, 1998, p. 166), Wintour out-Vreelands Vreeland, extending, diversifying, and amplifying the power and influence that can be wielded by the person at that magazine's helm. Further, Wintour's distinctive, matter-of-fact take on the many components of “what we do” illustrates, if to an extreme degree, the central role played by the fashion press and its editors in the world they cover and the “fashion system” as a whole (Kawamura, 2005; Moeran, 2006; Welters, 2011).

Also revealing are the ways Wintour puts her own spin on—and in some cases flouts—several of our most important media theories, beginning with agenda setting and gatekeeping. By creating events intended to discover new designers, and then nurturing, advising, and providing jobs for those designers, Wintour is directly involved in developing the material content of the fashion industry: new designs. This material content is then translated into the editorial content of her magazine. Wintour is thus engaging in a complex, multi-phased version of agenda setting: in addition to shaping audience priorities and preferences through the act of including or excluding content from a publication, she also actively works—behind the scenes and well before the moment of publication—to make possible the creation of the very materials that her magazine uses as content. She sets an industry's agenda, not merely her readers' agendas.

Overlapping with Wintour's expanded take on agenda-setting is her distinctive version of gatekeeping. While all editors determine which content is made available to audiences and which is not, Wintour is involved not only in selecting or rejecting editorial content (i.e., which fashions or designers to feature in *Vogue*) but in shaping designers' own creative processes. By consulting with designers, both aspiring and established, when their work is still in development, Wintour actively participates in *creating* the “events” the coverage of which she will (or will not) subsequently allow through her magazine's gates as news. Thus, in contrast to the canonical gatekeeping sequence—“activities in the media channel usually begin after the event occurs and after information begins to flow to various sources” (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p. 122)—Wintour works as a gatekeeper *before* the event occurs as well. She does not merely select and transmit information from the “given, finite, knowable reality of events in the ‘real world’” (McQuail, 2010, pp. 311-312) that pre-exist the editorial moment. Rather, Wintour steps well beyond the bounds of the traditional gatekeeper—and subverts the temporal sequence of the gatekeeping process—by serving as an agent in the very genesis of those events.

Wintour's actions also can be seen as reinterpreting the status-conferral function. As Lazarsfeld and Merton (1948) wrote,

the mass media bestow prestige and enhance the authority of individuals and groups by *legitimizing their status*. Recognition by the press or radio or magazines or newsreels testifies that one has arrived, that one is important enough to have been singled out from the large anonymous masses. (p. 101; emphasis in original)

There is no question that inclusion in an issue of *Vogue* magazine serves to confer status on designers and their work. However, a more interesting—and more powerful—form of status conferral enacted by Wintour occurs outside of and separate from the pages of *Vogue*. As attested in scenes from many of the texts reviewed above, Wintour herself confers status on designers by bestowing the CFDA/*Vogue* Fashion Fund award, by recommending them to (and effectively placing them in jobs at) major retail and design firms, and even by simply attending their fashion shows.

Closely related to Wintour's reinterpretation of the status-conferral function is her recasting of Lasswell's (1948) notion of the transmission of the social heritage, explained by Wright (1959/1999) as the communication processes by which a society's "values, social norms, knowledge, and other cultural components [are] made known to and instilled in members and potential members" (p. 52). Wintour does not merely "make known" the fashion industry's values and norms. As a consultant to designers, cultivator of new talent, and matchmaker between that new talent and established design organizations, Wintour also actively helps *bring about* those values and norms.

It is in relation to normative theories, however, where we see Anna Wintour taking the greatest liberties. Wintour's deep involvements with key players across the fashion and retail industries, and her extensive efforts not only to promote but also to financially support the fashion industry as a whole, represent a powerful reinterpretation—indeed, flouting—of the normative monitorial role of the press and, specifically, its standards of neutrality, objectivity, and autonomy. Wintour and her magazine champion certain designers and ignore others. Of course, as noted above, fashion-studies scholars have long suggested that such flouting of neutrality/objectivity is the norm for virtually all fashion publications; moreover, to people in the industry with whom I spoke, the idea that a fashion magazine should somehow be a detached observer of the world of fashion rather than a resident of—and even an active participant in—that world is not only illogical but downright bizarre (S. Ianiere, personal communication, November 29, 2011; see also McRobbie, 1998; Pogrebin, 1997).

That Wintour identifies herself and her magazine as components of the fashion industry, as opposed to autonomous reporters on or critics of that industry, comports with the logic of the fashion system—and not with the normative logic guiding "straight" journalism.¹⁸ This is not to suggest, however, that Wintour's interpretation of the role of magazine editor necessarily violates *ethical* standards of (fashion) journalism. Rather, I simply wish to point out that Wintour does so much more than edit *Vogue*. Indeed, as Joshua

Levine (2011) noted in a *Wall Street Journal Magazine* story: “with all of her globe-trotting, matchmaking, and event planning, it’s easy to forget that Wintour’s bread and butter is running a magazine.” Of course, as evidenced by the texts reviewed for the present study, Wintour runs more than just a magazine: she is credited by many people who observe her closely with running the fashion industry as a whole. As Wintour herself says in *Boss Women* (Lichtenstein & Hall, 2000), her job extends far “beyond what I just do by sitting at my desk at *Vogue*.”

Toward a New Category of Media Effects

Wintour’s activities, interests, and influences call for a rethinking—or at the very least, a broadening—of the very notion of *media effects*. Recall that effects have been variously defined as “social or psychological changes that occur in consumers of the media message systems” (Bryant & Zillmann, 2009, p. 13), as “the consequences or outcomes of the working of, or exposure to, mass media” (McQuail, 2005, p. 554), and as “change[s] in an outcome within a person or social entity that [are] due to mass media influence following exposure to a mass media message or series of messages” (Potter, 2011, p. 903). There is no question that Anna Wintour brings about these sorts of effects: that is, those that occur within audience members following, and as a consequence of, exposure to media content. (Consumers reading *Vogue* may develop or change their attitudes toward fashions and may therefore be influenced to prefer or purchase certain items and not others.)

However, as I have shown, Wintour’s more interesting—and, I would argue, more powerful—effects are those that she, through her platform as *Vogue*’s editor-in-chief, has on the creative, business, and employment processes of the fashion industry. These are not Bryant and Zillmann’s changes that “occur in consumers of the media message systems,”¹⁹ nor are they McQuail’s consequences of “exposure to mass media.” Perhaps most important, they are not Potter’s changes that occur “following exposure to a mass media message or series of messages.” Rather, Wintour brings about changes in the fashion industry *as* its business and creative leaders carry out their own design, marketing, and organizational processes—that is to say, among the people whose actions ultimately constitute the *content* of *Vogue*’s messages—before and/or entirely apart from any act of exposure to or dissemination of a media message.

I believe this powerful and distinctly performative “*Vogue* Effect”—the influence of media and their executives on the industries that they cover—is not limited to *Vogue*. Rather, it allows us to broaden the scope and definition of “media effects” and therefore has important implications for the future study of the roles, functions, and impacts of a wide variety of media organizations and the people who run them. Indeed, in research I am currently undertaking, I am exploring how this “*Vogue* Effect” plays out in the worlds of political media and politics (e.g., the influence of Fox News Channel CEO Roger Ailes on Republican Party campaign strategy), sports media and sports (e.g., the impact of ESPN and

other sports networks on professional leagues' functions and rules), and other media/industry sectors.

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Notes

1. As *Wall Street Journal* reporter Joshua Levine noted in his 2011 feature-length magazine article about Wintour, "She's been editor of the American edition of *Vogue* since 1988, and by now it has become commonplace to call her the most powerful woman in fashion." To that point, Ebert (2009), Givhan (2012), Goudreau (2011), Horyn (2007), and Kinsey (2009) are just a few of the virtually uncountable sources who use this phrase (or an

equivalent such as “most powerful person in fashion” or “most important person in fashion”) to describe Wintour.

2. The issue held the “largest ever” record until 2012, when that year’s September *Vogue* topped out at 916 pages.
3. Among the few exceptions are articles in *Advertising Age* and *The New York Times* that refer to her as “the world’s most powerful fashion editor” (Ives, 2006) and “one of the most powerful women in magazine publishing” (Wilson, 2013), respectively.
4. For example, John Skipper, CEO of the cable network ESPN, was rated the “most powerful person in sports business” by the online journal *Sports Business Daily* in 2012; the journal honored his predecessor, George Bodenheimer, with that same title in 2006.
5. Whether objectivity in reporting is achievable, let alone desirable, is of course a subject of much debate (Alterman, 2003; McChesney, 2004; Wolfsfeld, 2011). Similarly, as these and other scholars have pointed out, achieving journalistic autonomy may be equally if not more impossible as long as journalism organizations are for-profit ventures operating in capitalist market economies, and are answerable to advertisers, stockholders, and paying subscribers. As Schudson (2001) suggests, journalistic norms may sometimes exist more as moral ideals than as guides to actual practice.
6. This is by no means to suggest that mass communication scholars have ignored fashion magazines or other media focusing on fashion. However, the vast majority of the scholarship on fashion media, particularly work in the critical/cultural tradition, focuses on message analysis (e.g., communication about hegemonic standards of beauty, body image, femininity, or consumerism) or audience effects resulting from continual exposure to such problematic messages (e.g., low self-esteem, eating disorders, unattainable beauty/body goals).
7. To be more accurate, Kawamura (2011) defines fashion-ology as “a new discipline ... another name for a sociology of fashion” (p. 12).
8. McRobbie (1998) acknowledges that this may not be unique to the fashion industry and its associated media. Building on an argument originally offered by Jeremy Tunstall (1971), McRobbie notes that “because specialist fields in journalism associated with consumer-based activities are advertising-revenue led, they inevitably have a closer relationship with the industry which manufactures and promotes the product, since this is both the source of ‘news’ and of revenue” (p. 152).
9. Effusive comments like this one, the opening lines in an August 2012 *Huffington Post* article, are typical: “If the magazine industry was a pyramid, American *Vogue* would be on top—all by itself. After 120 years of production, *Vogue* has made itself into a fashion bible and it helps define what we will be buying and seeing for seasons to come” (Kelsey, 2012).

10. Similarly, in her book *Fashion: The Key Concepts*, Jennifer Craik (2009) noted that since the 1980s, Wintour has been treated as “fashion royalty” (p. 267).

11. The claim that *Vogue*'s editor “occupies the best seat at all the shows” is not hyperbolic. No fewer than two articles published in the Fashion section of *The New York Times* in February 2013 (Chang, 2013; Meltzer, 2013) included references to the fact that Anna Wintour always—and only—sits in the front row of any fashion show she attends. Not coincidentally, the title of Jerry Oppenheimer's (2005) unauthorized biography of Wintour is *Front Row*.

12. The ten texts, in addition to *The September Issue*, are the following: two documentaries (*Seamless* [Keeve & Tubio-Cid, 2005] and *Boss Women* [Lichtenstein & Hall, 2000]); four television interviews or news program segments (CBS's *The Early Show* [Tufaro, 2010], *Late Show* with David Letterman [Stangel & Foley, 2009], *60 Minutes* [Streeter, 2009], and *The Barbara Walters Special: The 10 Most Fascinating People of 2006* [Geddie, 2006]); and four magazine, newspaper, online, or hybrid interviews (*Forbes* [Goudreau, 2011], *Daily Telegraph* [Alexander, 2010], *Wall Street Journal* [Dodes, 2009], and *Interview* [Sischy, 1993]).

13. Wintour continues to be involved in supporting Galliano's increasingly controversial career. In March 2011, Galliano was fired by Dior after he was caught on video making anti-Semitic remarks in a Paris cafe (Willsher, 2011). In the summer of 2012, the UK's *Telegraph* (Sowray, 2012) reported that Wintour was seen lunching with Galliano in Paris; “Could it mean [Galliano] and Wintour are colluding on his comeback?” the article speculated. Finally, in January 2013, the UK-based online journal *Grazia* (Vince, 2013) reported that Galliano would be taking up temporary residence at the design studio of Oscar de la Renta. As Vince conspiratorially reported, “And guess who's behind the fashion partnership? None other than the all-powerful Anna Wintour, natch. The US *Vogue* editor is a friend of both designers and first suggested the residency.” De la Renta confirmed the partnership in a February 2013 interview in *New York Magazine* (Norwich, 2013): “I think John is one of the most talented men I've ever met. I like him very much . . . I went many times with Anna to his shows . . . So when Anna asked me if I would have John in my studio, I said yes.”

14. In January 2014, the Metropolitan Museum announced that it was renaming the Costume Institute. As of May 2014, it will be known as the Anna Wintour Costume Center (Vogel, 2014).

15. Similarly, during *The September Issue*, director R. J. Cutler (2009) asks Wintour's college-age daughter, Bee Shaffer, about her own career plans: “Do you think you'd ever work for the magazine, with your mom?” Bee's response, perhaps unconsciously, reveals both her own and her mother's view of Wintour's place in the world: “I really don't want to work in *fashion*; it's just not for me” (emphasis added).

16. Interestingly, aspiring designer Alexandre Plokhov offered a similar (and similarly imperfect) Wintour/Gates analogy in *Seamless* (Keeve & Tubio-Cid, 2005), as noted earlier.

17. In March 2013, Wintour was promoted to artistic director of Condé Nast, the publisher of *Vogue* as well as *Vanity Fair*, *The New Yorker*, *Architectural Digest*, and other magazines. As *The New York Times* reported, “She will remain the editor of *Vogue* and the editorial director of *Teen Vogue*, in addition to assuming broader creative duties throughout the company, and having a say in its expanding portfolio of platforms, including the recent development of an entertainment division.” Wintour’s take on her new job was quite revealing: “It is something I do a lot anyway in my role at *Vogue*,” Ms. Wintour said. “I advise all sorts of people in the outside world, and really, I see this as an extension of what I am doing, but on a broader scale” (Wilson, 2013).

18. Of course, as Schudson (2001) suggests, there is a great difference between journalists being aware of industry norms and actually abiding by them.

19. While fashion designers and industry executives are undoubtedly members of *Vogue*’s audience, Wintour’s influences on them, at least as evidenced by the texts analyzed in the present study, are not those that take place as a result of their exposure to the magazine’s content.